

News Release
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**AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER HELMICK, PARKERSBURG MAYOR
NEWELL ANNOUNCE OPENING OF NEW FARMERS MARKET**

A new farmers market will open Saturday, October 5 in Parkersburg just in time for the fall/winter season.

West Virginia Department of Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick spoke at an event at the Charleston Capitol Market on Wednesday to help raise awareness about business opportunities at the new Parkersburg Market for local farmers and vendors.

"In West Virginia we are consuming more than \$7 billion of food products annually," said Commissioner Helmick. "However, we are only *growing* one half of one billion. We have to do better."

According to the West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition, if "we increase the amount of West Virginia-produced food we consume by just 10%, the economic impact would be approximately \$66 million in revenues that would stay in-state."

Parkersburg Mayor Robert Newell was also on hand to show the layout of the new market and tell West Virginia vendors about increasing their business at their new market.

"The market will be open the first Saturday of the month from October to April. To encourage more people to get involved we are offering very reasonable prices for our vendors - only \$10 for a booth space each Saturday and a reduced rate of \$50 for those who commit to be there the entire season."

Newell said he also hoped the market could host a Pumpkin Patch this October and a Christmas Tree Farm in December.

The building, located at the River Park Entrance to Blennerhassett Island Tours, was formerly the Swan Hotel in downtown historic Parkersburg. The building was obtained by the city after they traded a parking lot for the property. "The building was acquired by the City of Parkersburg for the sole purpose of establishing a market," said Newell.

If you're interested in being a vendor or finding out more information about the new market in Parkersburg, contact Parkersburg City Planner, Ricky Yeager, at 304-424-8415 or Jarrod Dean, Special Projects Assistant at the WV Department of Agriculture, at 304-558-3200.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.